



EPI Update for Friday, November 19, 2021

**Office of the Public Health Medical Director
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis**

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza AH3N2 increasing in Iowa, especially among young adults**
- **Dramatic increase in U.S. drug overdose deaths**
- **Monkeypox: Ongoing cases in Nigeria, case identified in the U.S.**
- **In the news: CDC investigates flu outbreak at University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus**
- **Infographic: Medications for opioid overdose, withdrawal, and addiction**

Influenza AH3N2 increasing in Iowa, especially among young adults

Like several other parts of the U.S., reports of positive influenza tests in Iowa have increased recently. While influenza activity remains low on several indicators, SHL detected six influenza AH3N2 viruses among specimens submitted last week, and 4/6 were from persons age 18-24. Several other states have reported recent increases in influenza AH3N2, especially in young adults and children, including outbreaks among young adults.

Influenza activity is not unusual for a typical November, but Iowa has not observed significant influenza activity since March 2020, likely due to the many steps Iowans have taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, as many people are preparing to travel and gather for the holiday season, it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of influenza.

Getting an annual influenza vaccine is the best way to reduce spread and prevent severe illness. IDPH and CDC recommend nearly everyone 6 months and older get an annual influenza vaccine. All U.S. influenza vaccines produced this year help protect against four seasonal influenza viruses, including AH3N2. Other important actions include covering coughs and sneezes, staying away from others when you or they are sick, and talking to your health care provider about antiviral drugs to treat influenza if you are at higher risk of complications.

For more information about the recent increases in influenza activity, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2021-2022/flu-activity-increasing.htm and www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm.

Dramatic increase in U.S. drug overdose deaths

According to recent provisional data from CDC, there were an estimated 100,306 drug overdose deaths in the 12-month period ending in April 2021. This is an increase of 28.5% from the 78,056 deaths during the same period the year before. The primary cause for this increase were synthetic opioids like illicit fentanyl, which were involved in over 64,000 of the predicted number of deaths during the 12-month period.

To add to the concern, synthetic opioids like illicit fentanyl are showing up in other unexpected substances. While there has been an increase in deaths involving methamphetamines and opioids together, a recent notice from Connecticut identified several overdose incidents where naloxone was required for revival of individuals who reported only using marijuana. Laboratory tests later confirmed that marijuana obtained from one of the overdose scenes tested positive for fentanyl.

IDPH encourages individuals that if you are going to use substances that may contain illicit opioids, *don't use alone* and *have Narcan available*. Using in the presence of someone else that is able to offer assistance by administering Narcan in the event of a suspected overdose can be the difference between life and death. And for those individuals who are contemplating getting help with their usage, assistance is always available by contacting Your Life Iowa at yourlifeiowa.org or calling 855-581-8111.

To view the CDC report, visit

www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2021/20211117.htm.

Monkeypox: Ongoing cases in Nigeria, case identified in the U.S.

CDC and the Maryland Department of Health are investigating a case of monkeypox in a traveler who returned to the U.S. from Nigeria. CDC has confirmed the patient's infection matches the strain that has been re-emerging in Nigeria since 2017. The person is currently in isolation in Maryland.

CDC and public health partners are working to contact airline passengers and others who may have been in exposed to the patient. Travelers on the U.S. flight were required to wear masks on the plane as well as in U.S. airports due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it's believed the risk of spread of monkeypox via respiratory droplets on planes is low.

There is currently no indication that any Iowan was exposed to this individual.

Health care providers should remain vigilant to poxvirus-like lesions, particularly among travelers returning from Nigeria. Please report suspected cases to IDPH immediately by calling 515-242-5935 during business hours or 515-323-4360 outside of business hours

Monkeypox is a rare but potentially serious viral illness that typically begins with flu-like illness and swelling of the lymph nodes and progresses to a widespread rash on the face and body. Monkeypox re-emerged in Nigeria in 2017 after more than 40 years with no reported cases. Since 2017, 218 cases have been confirmed in Nigeria and eight cases have been reported in travelers from Nigeria, including a case in Texas in July 2021 and the current case.

For more information about monkeypox, visit www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html.

In the news: CDC investigates flu outbreak at University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus

www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/cdc-investigates-flu-outbreak-university-michigans-ann-arbor-campus-rcna5842

Infographic: Medications for opioid overdose, withdrawal, and addiction

MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID OVERDOSE, WITHDRAWAL, & ADDICTION

Medications for opioid **overdose**, **withdrawal**, and **addiction** are safe, effective and save lives.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse supports research to develop new medicines and delivery systems to treat opioid use disorder and other substance use disorders, as well as other complications of substance use (including withdrawal and overdose), to help people choose treatments that are right for them.

FDA-approved medications for opioid addiction, overdose, and withdrawal work in various ways.

- Opioid Receptor Agonist**
Medications attach to opioid receptors in the brain to block withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- Opioid Receptor Partial Agonist**
Medications attach to and partially activate opioid receptors in the brain to ease withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- Opioid Receptor Antagonist**
Medications block activity of opioid receptors in the brain to prevent euphoric effects (the high) of opioids and alcohol and help reduce cravings.
- Adrenergic Receptor Agonist**
A medication that attaches to and activates adrenergic receptors in the brain and helps alleviate withdrawal symptoms.

REDUCES OPIOID USE AND CRAVINGS

- Methadone**
Daily liquid or tablet
Dolophine®, Methadose®
Generics available
- Naltrexone**
Monthly injection
Vivitrol®
- Buprenorphine**
Daily tablet
Monthly injection
Sublocade®
Generic tablets available
- Buprenorphine/Naloxone**
Daily film under the tongue or tablet
Zubsolv®, Suboxone®
Generics available

TREATS WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

- Lofexidine**
As-needed tablet
Lucemyra®

REVERSES OVERDOSE

- Naloxone**
Emergency nasal spray or injection
Narcan®, Kloxxado®
Generics available

NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse
nida.nih.gov

To view in full size, visit

www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/medications-opioid-overdose-withdrawal-addiction.

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
800-362-2736

Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis
515-281-6801